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Va'eschanan in a Nutshell
(Deuteronomy 3:23-7:11)

Moses tells the people of Israel how he implored G-d to allow him to enter the Land of Israel, but G-d refused, instructing him instead to ascend a mountain and see the Promised Land.

Continuing his "review of the Torah," Moses describes the Exodus from Egypt and the Giving of the Torah, declaring them unprecedented events in human history. "Has there ever occurred this great thing, or has the likes of it ever been heard? Did ever a people hear the voice of G-d speaking out of the midst of the fire . . . and live? . . . You were shown, to know, that the L-rd is G-d . . . there is none else beside Him."

Moses predicts that in future generations the people will turn away from G-d, worship idols, and be exiled from their land and scattered amongst the nations; but from there they will seek G-d, and return to obey His commandments.

Our Parshah also includes a repetition of the Ten Commandments, and the verses of the Shema, which declare the fundamentals of the Jewish faith: the unity of G-d ("Hear O Israel: the L-rd our G-d, the L-rd is one"); the mitzvot to love G-d, to study His Torah, and to bind "these words" as tefillin on our arms and heads, and inscribe them in the mezuzot affixed on the doorposts of our homes. ❖

Our sages have taught, "Whoever gets angry, it is as if he worshipped idols." The reason for this is . . . because at the time of his anger, his faith has left him. For were he to believe that what happened to him was G-d's doing, he would not be angry at all. --Tanya

Anshei Lubavitch Congregation

Rabbi Levi and Leah Neubort

Adult education:

Rabbi Avrohom and Rivky Bergstein

Youth Outreach:

Rabbi Eli and Ruty Steinhauser

Shabbos – Parshas Va'eschanan

Erev Shabbos – Aug 16 – Av 15

Candle Lighting 7:36 pm
Mincha 7:30 pm

Shabbos Day – Aug 17 – Av 16

Shacharis 9:30 am*
Torah Reading 10:35 am
Rabbi Neubort's Drasha 11:10 am
Kiddush 12:10 pm
Gemara (2-31 Summit) 6:35 pm
Shiur & Shalosh Seudos 6:35 pm
Mincha 7:35 pm
Rabbi's Drasha 7:55 pm
Shabbos Ends 8:36 pm

**Latest morning Shema is 9:32 AM. Be sure to recite the Shema at or before that time (even if at home).*

Weekday Schedule (not on a holiday):

Minyan

Shacharis 6:15 am
Mincha 1:45 pm
Maariv 9:15 pm

Classes

Chassidus, Mon-Fri 5:55 am
Halachah, Mon-Fri 1:40 pm
and at 9:25 pm
Torah Studies Mon. 7-8:00 pm
Tuesday Talmud 9:30-10:00 pm
Wednesday Mishna 8:30-9:15 pm

This week's Kiddush is sponsored by Rabbi Dr. Avi and Adrienne Kuperberg in commemoration of the 12th yahrtzeit of his mother, Leba bas Michael.

Thank You to:
Nachum Nachum for reading the Torah and to our Kiddush and Security Volunteers

Join us each weekday morning Mon-Fri as we delve into the mysteries of Chassidic concepts. 5:55 am followed immediately by Shacharis.

Sponsor a Kiddush or the Weekly Bulletin
It's a wonderful way to honor a loved one, remember a yahrzeit, or celebrate a special occasion.
For more information, please contact the Rabbi.

Halachic Zmanim
Shabbos, August 17
Daylight Savings Time
Earliest Tallis 5:07 AM
Latest Morning Shema 9:32 AM
Earliest Mincha (Gedola) ..1:35 PM
Plag Hamincha 6:30 PM
Earliest Evening Shema 8:22 PM

Chassidic Masters

“The Inexistence of the Universe”

*Based on the teachings of
the Lubavitcher Rebbe
Courtesy of MeaningfulLife.com*

Groping for a transcendent word in a vocabulary generated by our physical lives, we seize upon "light." Light is our metaphor for the incorporeal, the spiritual, the Divine. We speak of an era of "enlightenment" dispelling dark ages of ignorance and ignominy, of a "ray" of hope penetrating the blackness of despair, of the Divine "light" that bathes the virtuous soul.

Light straddles the defining line that runs between the physical and the spiritual. Sans weight, sans mass, sans just about any of matter's properties, light is the most ethereal of physical "things." Perceptibly real, yet free of the qualities we ascribe to the objects of our perceptible universe, light serves as a bridge of allegory between a mind grounded in a material environment and the metaphysical abstractions it contemplates.

None Else

In his Tanya, Rabbi Schneur Zalman of Liadi employs the metaphor of light to explain what is perhaps the most radical truth expressed by the Torah: the inexistence of the universe.

Twice in the 4th chapter of Deuteronomy (verses 35 and 39

respectively), the Torah makes this amazing statement:

You were shown to know that the L-rd is G-d, there is none else beside Him.

Know today, and take unto your heart, that the L-rd is G-d, in the heavens above and the earth below, there is none else.

The ever-sensible mind, confronted with overwhelming evidence to the contrary, may perhaps interpret these verses to mean that there are no gods other than He. I, the mind will insist, the body I occupy, the table it is sitting at, and the computer screen it is looking at, certainly exist. These verses, then, are only affirming the basic tenet of Judaism — that there is but a single, singular creator and ruler of the universe.

Not so, say the Kabbalists and the Chassidic masters: "there is none else" means that there is none else. Indeed, they explain, to maintain that there are existences other than G-d is ultimately the same as maintaining that there are other "gods" beside Him. What real difference is there between saying that the universe is governed by thousands of gods, or by a god of good and an equally potent god of evil, or by a very powerful god who (almost) always triumphs over a much weaker Satan, or by a great and mighty god who pervades every iota of existence save for a single cubic centimeter of space? Ultimately, one is saying that there is more than one independently potent force in existence. To say that there is a god with the power to

punish the wicked and reward the righteous, cause galaxies to spin and crops to grow, but that there also exists a single pebble with a power independent of His — be it only the power to exist — is to deny His exclusive divinity and power.

So when the Jew daily declares, "Hear O Israel, the L-rd is our G-d, the L-rd is one," this is more than an affirmation that there is but one deity. It is a statement on the inexistence of all else save His one being.

Real in Relation

Yes, we perceive our own existence and the existence of the myriads of objects and forces we call "the universe." But this is our finite and subjective perception of reality. If we could observe reality from the all-transcendent perspective of the Creator, we would see a "world" devoid of selfhood and being. In the words of the Tanya: "If the eye were allowed to see the life and spiritual content flowing from the utterance of G-d's mouth into every creation, we would not see the materiality, grossness, and tangibility of the creation, for it would be utterly nullified in relation to this divine life-force..."

Modern physics demonstrates the relativity of apparent absolutes such as time and space. An object or event cannot be said to possess an intrinsic size or duration: these are always a matter of perspective. The same object may be an inch

in length, as observed from point A, and a hundred miles long, as observed from point B; the same event can be said to transpire over the course of a second or a thousand years, again depending on the position and velocity of the observer. The mind may have to bend over backwards to assimilate a vision of reality so radically different from its first-hand experience of its environment, but every high-school science student has read of the experiments and seen the diagrams that demonstrate this truth.

But the Torah has a more demanding task for the mind: to comprehend the relativity of existence itself. To understand that the very it-ness of creation, even the very "I" that is making the observations, is also a matter of perspective. That while the created reality perceives itself as real, there is a higher perspective from which reality is the truth that "there is none else beside Him."

Where, in our experience of the universe, is there an example of this sense-defying truth, an analog that may aid us in achieving this tremendous leap of mind? What model have we for the relativity of a thing's very existence? Light.

Light exists. We regard light as an entity distinct from its emitter, distinguishing between a luminous body and its luminescent expression. An observer on earth, for example, perceives both the sun and the light that extends from it, and hence our dictionary includes both the terms "sun" and "sunlight."

But what would be the perspective of an observer within the sun? Would he, too, perceive "sunlight" as an existence distinct from the sun? Obviously not. Light, by definition, has a source and a destination, an emitter and an observer; light is information — a communication from one thing to another. Light, then, exists only in relation to that which is outside of its source, but not in relation to the source itself. If sunlight is defined as "the sun's luminescent expression," then it cannot be said to "exist" within the sun, where the very notion of "expression" is superfluous and meaningless.

Does this mean that the entity we call light "begins" outside of the sun? Again, the answer is obviously No. The sun itself is not dark; the luminescence that extends from it certainly pervades it. It is just that the concept of "light" has validity and meaning only to an observer outside of the light's source. Lacking substance of its own, light exists only insofar as it serves its function: to carry information and effect from its emitter to that which lies outside its emitter. Where it has no function (i.e. within its emitter), it does not exist — not because it is any less "there," but because it lacks the context that defines its existence.

Light, then, both exists and does not exist at the same time, depending on the context in which it is viewed. It goes from non-existence to existence not by undergoing any intrinsic change but simply by being observed from a different vantage point — a point

in relation to which its function has significance.

So light, explains the Tanya, is the metaphor through which we can try to understand the relative existence of the universe. Our world is "light" emitted by G-d: an expression of His omnipotence, a revelation of His majesty. As "light," the created reality has no substance of its own, no intrinsic being; its "existence" is defined solely by its function — to express and reveal its Emitter. So the world exists only as observed from without its Creator and Source. As seen from G-d's perspective, it does not merit the term "existence" — again, not because it is any less "there" (G-d, after all, tells us in His Torah that He created a world), but because in relation to the Divine "sun" the defining function of the sunlight of creation is utterly insignificant.

[Rabbi Schneur Zalman takes this a step further, pointing out an important difference between the sun/sunlight analogue and the Creator/creation relationship it illustrates. With the sun, we identify two distinct areas in whose context the "existence" of sunlight is considered: outside the sun, and within the sun. Outside the sun, sunlight exists; within the sun, it is non-existent. Regarding the Almighty, however, the existence of this "second perspective" is itself only a matter of perspective.

(Continued on next page)

In truth, there is no "area" that is outside of G-d's infinite reality; the "vacuum" into which G-d emanates His light is a vacuum of perception, real only from our mortal perspective. In other words, G-d did not create a reality outside of Himself, only the perception of a reality outside of Himself. So the "light" of creation is, in truth, "sunlight within the sun" — that is, non-existent light. To us, the world exists only because we perceive ourselves as being "outside of the sun" — a perceived vantage point from which "sunlight" is perceived as an "existence."]

The View from Sinai

As cited above, the Torah twice reiterates the exclusivity of G-d's existence, twice in the same chapter proclaiming that "there is none else" other than He. For there are two paths by which man may come to appreciate the nature of his reality vis-a-vis the Divine: from the top down, and from the bottom up.

The first verse (verse 35) is referring to the day that "G-d descended on Mount Sinai" in a unilateral revelation of His all-pervading truth. On that day, Moses reminds the assembled community of Israel forty years later, "you were shown to know that the L-rd is G-d, there is none else beside Him." On that day you were raised above the arc of your subjective vision of self and existence, and accorded a glimpse of reality from His perspective.

The revelation at Sinai was a brief "foretaste" of a future world — a world in which all masks and super-

imposed "perceptions" will fall away. A world in which "your master shall no longer shroud Himself; your eyes shall behold your Master"; a world in which "the world shall be filled with the knowledge of G-d as the waters cover the sea" (Isaiah 30:20 and 11:9). The world of Moshiach, when, as the Zohar puts it, "G-d will take the sun out of its sheath" and obliterate the concealment that effects the perception of a reality outside of His.

Bracketed between the revelation at Sinai and the revelation of Moshiach, we live in a world in which our Master does shroud Himself — a world in which the sun remains sheathed and we are not "shown to know." It is regarding this world that the Torah enjoins us, in the second verse cited above, to "know today, and take unto your heart" that "in the heavens above and the earth below, there is none else." The knowledge is there, embodied in the heavens above and the earth below: in every blade of grass, in every sunset, in the depths of our minds, and in the sublimity of our hearts. In this world the onus is upon us to unearth this truth, comprehend it, and incorporate it into our hearts and lives.

This explains the difference between these two verses. When we are shown the Divine truth, there are no details, no mention of "the heavens above and the earth below." As viewed from the supernal perspective, the particulars of creation fade to insignificance. One does not even

see the distinction between the spiritual ("the heavens above") and the material ("the earth below") — only the singular truth that "there is none else beside Him." But when our quest begins from the bottom up, it is precisely these details and distinctions that build our knowledge and appreciation of the Divine truth. The more we delve into creation's components, the more we recognize them as rays of Divine luminescence. We recognize that creation is "light": an existence defined not in term of self-being but as the bearer of a higher truth. ❖

A Hearty Yashe-Koach to Our Anshei Security Committee

**They continue to help keep
our shul safe, while also
learning the latest in legal
protection tactics.**

**They also train in First-Aid
and other medical options**

**And you can be a part of it.
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Haftorah in a Nutshell – 1st Shabbos of Consolation

Isaiah 40:1–26

This week's haftorah is the first of a series of seven “haftarot of Consolation.” These seven haftarot commence on the Shabbat following Tisha B’Av and continue until Rosh Hashanah.

This section of Isaiah begins with G-d’s exhortation to the prophets: “Console, O console My people . . . Announce to Jerusalem that her period of exile has been fulfilled and that her sins have been forgiven.”

Isaiah’s prophecy describes some of the miraculous events that will unfold with the onset of the messianic era, such as the return of the exiles to Jerusalem, the revelation of G-d’s glory, and the rewards and retribution that will then be meted out.

The prophet then goes on to comfort the people, describing G-d’s power and might, and reassuring them of His care for His people. ❖

From Our Sages

But you who cleave to the L-rd your G-d are alive, every one of you, this day (Deuteronomy 4:4)

The wicked, even in their lifetimes, are considered dead. . . . The righteous, even in death, are considered alive.
-- (Talmud, Berachot 18a–b)

G-d is the exclusive source of life; hence life, by definition, is connection with G-d. A “life” of disconnection from G-d is pseudo-life—life devoid of all but its most superficial illusory shell.

-- (The Chassidic Masters)

Community Events

Starting Sept. 5 – **Jewelry Making Workshop.** Make your own unique accessories – bracelets, necklaces, and earrings. In each week of a 5-week course, a new technique is presented and used to create a beautiful, hand-made piece of jewelry. Thursdays, 9:30 – 11:30 AM at Fair Lawn Jewish Center. Sign up at: www.Sabraculture.com

Starting Sept. 5 – **Beginner Israeli Dancing for Women.** Thursdays, 11:30 AM – 1:30 PM at Fair Lawn Jewish Center. Costs as low as \$10. Register at: www.Sabraculture.com

Good Shabbos to all!



NEW COURSES OF INTEREST

FALL: Worrier to Warrior

12 Cheshvan 5780 / November 10, 2019

We yearn to feel happy, self-assured, and enthusiastic, yet we're consumed by feelings of doubt, regret, insecurity, and suffering. Do our delicate positive emotions have a fighting chance at being in control?

This course explores negative emotions in a completely new light, offering spiritual mechanisms that allow us to remain upbeat no matter what life brings.

WINTER: Judaism's Gifts to the World

29 Teves 5780 / January 26, 2020

This course explores some of the notable values and attitudes that Jews have shared with the world.

Once considered preposterous, many of these teachings are taken for granted today. The story of this transition is both instructive and fascinating.

The course also considers how Judaism can continue to serve as a beacon of light and wisdom for all of humankind.

SPRING: Secrets of the Bible

9 Iyar 5780 / May 3, 2020

Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Noah's Ark. Joseph and his brothers. We all heard these stories; but what do they really mean?

This course explores six famous and infamous biblical stories, showing how the many details, questions, and mysterious twists are resolved using the lens of the mystical "soul of Torah."

In the process, we discover the cosmic significance of these iconic stories, as well as their practical applications.

MONDAY EVENING TORAH STUDIES

7:00-8:00 PM • Maariv at 9:15

This week only:

**Sunday, August 18, 2019, 7:00 pm
SHATTERED DREAMS**

Ground Zero is a Construction Site

The image of a horrified Moses smashing the precious tablets is seared into the Jewish conscious forever. But what most people don't know is that those broken shards are remembered not as a tragedy, but as a moment of glory. For buried in those broken pieces are wild dreams and incredible new beginnings.

COMING SOON!

A rare opportunity to begin studying the Torah in-depth from the very beginning

TORAH B'YUN

will begin **Thursday** evening, **Elul**

5, Sep. 5th, 8:00 pm

You don't want to miss this!

Shiur and Seuda Shlishis

Special guest speaker

Rabbi Chaim Bergstein

will discuss

Finding a Healthy Balance in Jewish Study and Practice
6:40 pm

Between Mincha & Ma'ariv

Shiur with Rabbi Levi Neubort

"And you Shall Study them Day and Night" – The difference between the Shema and Torah Study



CHASSIDUS

5:55-6:10 AM

Monday-Friday

THE MITZVAH OF HAVING FAITH IN G-D

A discourse by Rabbi Menachem Mendel of Lubavitch, the Tzemach Tzedek



SHULCHAN ARUCH

1:40-1:45 PM

Monday-Thursday

Currently learning **HILCHOS TEFILLAH**

Laws of Reading the Shema

9:25-9:30 PM

Sunday-Thursday

Currently learning **HILCHOS SHLIACH TZIBUR**

Laws of Leading the Davening



MISHNA

8:30-9:10 PM

Wednesday

Currently learning **MISHNAYOS, tractate SUKKAH**

Chapter 5 POSTPONED



TALMUD

9:30-10:00 PM

Tuesday

Currently learning **TALMUD, tractate SUKKAH p. 21b**

THIS WEEK THE SHIUR WILL BE ON SUNDAY



WANT TO LISTEN TO A CLASS ON-THE-GO? Text your WhatsApp number to 201-362-2712 to join the Torah Classes @ Anshei Group